

Spectacle

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@Chestatee SDA



It's an interesting word isn't it. Typically we probably think of it as not very *flattering*. For example..."You've made a spectacle of yourself". What are the implications of saying it it like that?

Paul uses it differently. He uses our word in the NT in a deeply *profound and*

personal way, referring to God's people.

For you Word Nerds,

◀ 2300. theaomai ▶

Strong's Concordance

theaomai: to behold, look upon

Original Word: θεάομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: theaomai

Phonetic Spelling: (theh-ah'-om-ahee)

Definition: to behold, look upon

Usage: I see, behold, contemplate, look upon, view; I see, visit.

HELPS Word-studies

2300 *theáomai* (from *tháomai*, "to gaze at a spectacle") – properly, gaze on (contemplate) as a *spectator*; to observe *intently*, especially to *interpret* something (grasp its *significance*); to see (*concentrate on*) so as to significantly

impact (influence) the viewer.

[2300 (*theáomai*) is the root of 2302 /*théatron* ("spectacle in a theatre"), the root of the English term, "theatre."]

"All the world's a stage" doesn't always mean a *deceptive* thing, as we'll see. Satan uses that stage to deceive, things are not as they appear. God uses that same stage for a very different purpose.

The word appears **3 times** in the Bible, as far as I could find. Once in the OT, twice in the New. The OT use isn't very flattering though, the word is used in the *negative* sense, but the principle is there.

God speaking of what **Nineveh** would become if it didn't repent,

I will cast abominable filth upon you,
Make you vile, And make you a

spectacle. It shall come to pass that all who look upon you Will flee from you, and say, 'Nineveh is laid waste! Who will bemoan her?' Where shall I seek comforters for you?"
Nahum 3:6-7 NKJV

Ouch!

In the **New Testament** however, it's used in a *completely different way*. In a deeply profound and personal way describing the followers of Jesus.

He uses it in Hebrews 10:33, and again in our scripture reading. The only two places in the NT.

***Everybody* turn to 1 Corinthians 4**

A little background is helpful. A little context....

The apostle Paul was never **shy** about

calling out *wrong attitudes or behavior or bad theology* was he? You don't have to read much of the New Testament to get that Paul was *jealous* over the churches that he planted.

For I am *jealous* for you with godly jealousy.

II Corinthians 11:2 NKJV

Why do you think he spent so much time & effort writing letters, circling back and actually *visiting* the churches he planted when he heard of issues or false teachers coming in behind him and undoing his work. Why?

Paul saw the big picture. He firmly understood the **war** that we're in, and the compromise that could easily enter the church. And how it could permanently alter the *trajectory* of the young movement.

Examples such as treating the **Communion** as a reason to *party* in 1 Cor 11 "don't you people have homes to eat and drink in??" Or calling out Peter *publicly* for being a **hypocrite** in Galatians 2. He wasn't shy.

In our passage for today Paul is doing the same thing: correcting, scolding, *warning* the leaders of the church in Corinth regarding a specific issue.

I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I **warn you**. I Corinthians 4:14 NKJV

The issue?

There were those in the church who felt they were *better* than Paul, and the other apostles. They had become proud, arrogant, and self centered, and were being a **terrible example** to the young church. They were after

attention, and power, and were most certainly spreading a *false narrative* about Paul and his ministry and teaching of the Gospel. Trying to undermine him. And you thought this was just a 21st century political thing!

They had never heard apparently,

A false witness who speaks lies, And
one who sows discord among brethren.
Proverbs 6:19 NKJV

Let us not become conceited, provoking
one another, envying one another.
Galatians 5:26 NKJV

It's interesting that Paul doesn't specifically address their false teachings (at least here) but focuses on the bad *example* they were being to the young church. **This is not how followers of Jesus operate!**

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.

Romans 16:17-18 NIV

Paul calls them "puffed up" a number of times in our passage.

In verses 1-4 Paul is talking about not being ***judgy***. Which sets up the framework for the rest of the chapter.

1 Cor 4:1-4 NKJV

The verse that sticks out to me is this one,

For I know of nothing against myself,

yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.
1 Corinthians 4:4 NKJV

What's Paul saying here? He is not the least bit concerned about what other people think or say about *him*. That is a difficult thing to do isn't it. To not really care?

Paul didn't. He found *all* of his worth and value in **Christ alone**.

Oh how self esteem issues, bullying, peer pressure, gossip.. and the resulting depression that can come, would largely melt away if we *owned* 1 Cor 4:4. Especially the **young people**, with depression *Soaring* in this country now, largely because of social media & low self esteem. If we only understood our value in *Jesus*.

"All men have been bought with this

infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. We are **His** by creation and by redemption." *Christ Object Lessons*

If you are His and His alone, **why worry** of the opinions of others. Especially the enemies of God? This was Paul's foundation for the rest of the chapter.

1 Cor 4:5-8 NKJV

Vs 6 Puffed up used the first time! Puff N Stuff. The Greek word is (foo-see-o'-o) meaning a *bellows*. **WIND**. It's translated to mean proud, arrogant. The very *opposite* of the character of Jesus. The underlying issue with *pride* is self sufficiency.

"The evil that led to Peter's fall and that

shut out the Pharisee from communion with God is proving the ruin of thousands today. There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable." *Christ Object Lessons*

Before human history even began, **Lucifer** had this problem,

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. Ezekiel 28:17 NKJV

After the fall of man, **Cain** was the first one seen to have this problem.

"[Cain] chose the course of self-dependence. He would come in his own merits. He would not bring the lamb, and mingle its blood with his

offering, but would present *his* fruits, the products of *his* labor." PP

That you may *learn* in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be *puffed up* on behalf of one against the other.

I Corinthians 4:6 NKJV

Paul knew the devastation that could come from these attitudes in the church. He is absolutely establishing the **DNA** of the young Christian church. A foundation for a movement that would grow from perhaps a few thousand in the first century, to *billions* of believers today. So a solid foundation was critical. They needed to understand who they are.

Vs 7-8 Basically what Paul is saying here is "why are you acting like this with each other?" You are rich kings *already!* He's establishing the reality of who we

are as a people.

Understand who we are in reality,

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a **peculiar people**; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1 Peter 2:9 KJV

He has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 1:6 NKJV

What's the point? We are *utterly unique* among all peoples on the earth.

Redeemed, set apart, changed.

Peculiar. So act like it! Paul says. And then he goes on to describe in sometimes *sarcastic detail* what the true nature of a disciple of Jesus looks like. In reality, on the ground, in the day

to day.

1 Cor 4:10-13 NKJV

These verses reminds me of this one,

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.
Philippians 3:7-8 NKJV

Paul is laying it all out! He *desperately* wants them to see and understand, **who they are**. They are not like the world any longer, they are the complete *opposite*.

Paul understands the seriousness of the example these false teachers were having. It strikes right at the heart of the **Great Controversy**.

He knows what's at stake. Would the church look like just another human endeavor, full of pride and corruption and greed and selfishness? Or would it be something **very different**. Something that would be attractive to the world, transformative, and show what God is *really like*.

Jesus had the *same* **issues** with his disciples,

And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles Lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall

be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
Mark 10:41-45 NKJV

- ✓ The upside down kingdom
- ✓ Utterly unique on the face of earth
- ✓ Displaying the very character of God
- ✓ Self-less love

All the world is a stage,

The world is a theater; the actors, its inhabitants, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama. With the great masses of mankind, there is no unity, except as men confederate to accomplish their selfish purposes. God is looking on. His purposes in regard to His rebellious subjects will be fulfilled. The world has not been given into the hands of men, though God is permitting the elements of confusion and disorder to bear sway for a season. A power from beneath is working to bring about the last great scenes in the drama,—Satan coming as Christ, and working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are binding themselves together in secret societies. Those who are yielding to the passion for confederation are working out the plans of the enemy. The cause will be followed by the effect.—[Testimonies for the Church 8:27, 28.](#)
{ChS 50.1}

Paul knows there's a war going on, and an **Enemy** hard at work against us. Here's a glimpse at his main tactic on that stage,

“Satan is constantly at work, with

intense energy and under a thousand *disguises*, to **misrepresent** the character and government of God. With extensive, well-organized plans and marvelous power, he is working to hold the inhabitants of the world under his deceptions." *Patriarchs and Prophets*

"It is Satan's **constant effort** to *misrepresent the character of God*, the nature of sin, and the real issues at stake in the great controversy." GC

And it's working. In the minds of billions of **unbelievers** today, God's true nature is misunderstood in thousands of different ways.

- ☑ Tyrant, why would you worship?
- ☑ Aloof, why give your time?
- ☑ Santa Claus, why obey?
- ☑ A concept, why serve him?
- ☑ Not there, why even consider it?

Babylon is **confusion**, and Satan has people *confused* about who God really is. Exactly his plan. It's working great!

God has a number of way to **reveal his true nature** to humanity.

Jesus

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. John 14:8-10 NKJV

The selfless servant hood life Jesus lived, is who God is.

Nature

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:20 NKJV

And there's another important way God reveals His nature to a confused world

If Satan puts this much *effort* into getting people to misunderstand who God really is through deception, and thereby keeping people from Him... what is **God's plan** in this great controversy to *counteract* it?

YOU are God's plan! For setting the record straight, and *proving* that His ways are the right ways. *Proving* that He is love, through a changed life.

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a **spectacle** to the world, both to angels and to men. I Corinthians 4:9 NKJV

Spectacles to the world. In the spotlight. Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide. **Your changed life on display for all to see.** Right on the front lines of the great controversy.

The word translated here to *spectacle* comes from the Greek word **theatron**, which mean literally "on display".

Your life is **on display** before everyone. Before your friends, your coworkers, your neighbors. Especially for those who are unconverted, the way you live your life is very telling. People ARE watching you! The question they are asking? What's the *benefit* of being a

follower of Jesus. What is God really like. Is it all *real*?

You are displaying the character of Jesus to everyone! **A lot of pressure?** Well we are in a war, so..

EGW paints this picture of our current reality,

"The fallen world is the battlefield for the greatest conflict the heavenly universe and earthly powers have ever witnessed. It was appointed as a **theater** on which would be fought out the grand struggle between good and evil, between heaven and hell. Every human being **acts a part** in this conflict. No one can stand on neutral ground. Men must either accept or reject the world's Redeemer. All are witnesses, either for or against Christ. Christ calls upon those who stand under His banner to engage in the conflict with Him as

faithful soldiers, that they may inherit the crown of life." *Sons and Daughters of God*

Jesus puts it this way in **John 17** when praying for his followers,

Vs 9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.

Once again, your worth is found only in your Creator.

Vs 14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Why hated? Completely the opposite of the world.

Vs 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that

the world may *know* that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

You are the proof! Your changed life, your love and care *for each other*.

Vs 25-26 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have **declared to them Your name**, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

The world **doesn't know** God largely because of the tactics of Satan that we've discussed, to blind people from God's true nature. Because once people see IT? In you. See that He **is** love? The Devil's ship is sunk.

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

whose minds the god of this age has **blinded**, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should *shine on them*. II Corinthians 4:3-4 NKJV

Back to our verse,

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a *spectacle* to the **world, both to angels and to men**. I Corinthians 4:9 NKJV

Paul expands this thought.. You're a spectacle not just to humans, but to angels as well. And I'll take it a step further and say your life is on display to the **entire watching universe**.

That's a big spotlight!

Who is on **trial** in this great controversy? God is.

"From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God. It was to accomplish this that he entered upon his **rebellion against the Creator**, and though he was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth." GC

Do you know how God will be **vindicated** before everyone in the end?

"The church, being endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the wealth of His mercy, His love, His grace, is to **appear** in full and final **display**." *God's Amazing Grace*

And then she goes on to write that nothing frustrates and infuriates Satan more than **a changed life**, and his inability to do anything about it.

This was always the purpose of God's **remnant people**, beginning with Israel,

"Yet God had chosen Israel. He had called them to preserve among men the knowledge of His law, and of the symbols and prophecies that pointed to the Saviour. He desired them to be as wells of salvation to the world. What Abraham was in the land of his sojourn, what Joseph was in Egypt, and Daniel in the courts of Babylon, the Hebrew people were to be among the nations. They were to reveal God to men." DA

And us today, God's remnant people, spiritual Israel, are to do the same even in the face of the most intense persecution you can't even imagine.

To wrap up, how sobering is it to know that you have such an integral and important part in this Great

Controversy? That your life has this much meaning and purpose!

God designed it this way. He could have just **declared** himself right. But there could still be doubt in the free will minds of his creation.

So he chose to prove it. **Through you.**

Does it make you want to live up to your faith, and share it?

2 Peter 3:10-12 NIV

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, **what kind of people ought you to be?** You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

Amen.

There will be a **judgment** before Christ returns, a Pre Advent Judgment.

Rev 14:7

“Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come.

A judgment of all professed Christians, with your life on display before the entire watching universe. On the biggest jumbo tron in the history of electronics.

Two purposes,

One, to show once and for all that you are worthy of heaven. That you indeed made the daily decision to trust your life with Christ, therefore you can be trusted in heaven.

To the unsaved and unrighteousness,

they would view your simple life of obedience and compassion and love, and scoff.. Pfftt, weakness. They would say.

1Cor 1:18

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

But the unfallen universe will disagree.

Two, God Himself, and His ways of truth and mercy and love, is vindicated. How does your righteous life serve to vindicate God? Millions of righteous lives.

"The plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of

this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. "

"The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan."

You are a spectacle before man, the angels and the universe. It's really the perfect plan to end the problem of sin forever.